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Filipinos in U.S. Were Harassed, Ex-Aides Assert

Families of Opponents Described as Targets

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 25 — Filipino dissidents in the United States may have been spied on and harassed by Philippine Government agents, according to former State Department officials and a Pentagon intelligence document.

In interviews today, two former high-ranking Carter Administration officials said today that the United States had intercepted messages from Manila to Filipino agents in this country five years ago ordering them to harass opponents of Ferdinand E. Marcos's regime in the United States.

F.B.I. Investigated Matter

The former State Department officials said the intercepts were made during the Carter Administration and that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had been asked to investigate. A Defense Intelligence Agency report made public on Wednesday by Representative Don Edwards, Democrat of California, indicated that the United States believed that the practice of harassing Filipino dissidents in this country has continued.

The agency report, dated July 1982, said a new defense attaché team at the Philippine Embassy would "undoubtedly report on, and possibly operate against, anti-Marcos Philippine activists in the United States."

The former State Department officials said that the harassment commonly consisted of efforts by Marcos agents to threaten opponents with retaliation against family members in the Philippines, or even to disrupt meetings of anti-Marcos groups. Mr. Edwards, in a press release, said Marcos agents might have been involved in the murder of two anti-Marcos dock workers in California two years ago.

New Defense Attaché Sent

The officials said the State Department had no direct responsibility in the matter because it was viewed then as an F.B.I. matter. Neither knew what follow-up action was taken by the F.B.I. The bureau had no comment. State Department officials declined to say if they had information on whether any Philippine agents were currently engaged in harassment.

The Defense Intelligence Agency study reported on the sending to this country of a new defense attaché to the Philippine Embassy, Brig. Gen. Angel G. Kanapi, along with four subordinates. The study pointed out that Gen. Kanapi was chosen by Benjamin Romualdez, the new Philippines Ambassador to this country and the brother of Mr. Marcos's wife, Imelda.

The report said the new defense attaché team was significant because it was the first time an officer of Gen. Kanapi's rank had been sent here in many years.

In a telephone interview today, Gen. Kanapi was indignant at the suggestion in the D.I.A. study that his group might be operating against opponents of the regime.

He said he intended to raise the matter with the defense agency.

"I'm just as surprised as anyone else," he said. "I'm just doing my job as specified by the Geneva Convention."

He acknowledged that as part of his assignment, he monitored the activities of anti-Marcos groups.

"I monitor all activities that are supposed to have something to do with my country," he said. When asked if he "operated" against them, he said: "Why should we operate against them? That's not our job."

Personnel in American embassies abroad are routinely asked by the F.B.I. to keep track of American citizens who are suspected of crimes in the United States, State Department officials said, but they are not permitted to take any action against them.

As a result of the disclosure of the report, the State Department issued a statement today that said, "The United States Government is committed to taking all necessary measures to stop harassment and intimidation of persons in the United States by agents of foreign governments."

"We have made this policy known to other governments," the statement said. "The Federal Bureau of Investigation investigates all allegations of such activity and if the allegations are substantiated, we will take appropriate measures."

One official said the Philippines was one of the countries that had been warned in the past about operations against its citizens living in this country. Others have been South Korea, Taiwan, Libya and Iran. Relations have been broken with Libya since 1982, and the activities of the Iranian intelligence agency, known as Savak, ended with the fall of the Shah in 1979.

The chief Filipino dissident who lived in this country in recent years was Benigno S. Aquino Jr., who was slain on Sunday minutes after he returned to Manila to lead an opposition political movement against Mr. Marcos.

As a result of his assassination, several members of Congress have called on the Administration to take action against the Marcos regime, even though there is no proof that he was killed by its agents.

Today Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, sent a letter to President Reagan urging him to cancel his planned trip to the Philippines in November.